

Proponent Testimony for House Bill 472
House Homeland Security Committee
May 15, 2024

Donna J. Young

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chairman Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Homeland Security Committee:

It has taken some time but here, finally, is HB472. This is a sorely needed bill that I implore you to support and pass as soon as possible. This bill will address fixing the broken, inconsistent procedures and processes for registering legal Ohio citizens to vote in our precious elections. Currently, there doesn't seem to be a clear, uniform approach to accomplish this important task. There are different or non-existent verification procedures in place for citizens and non-citizens to register depending on the method used: filling out a paper form, going to a website or showing up in person at the BMV. Some people are even allowed to register by filling out only 4 digits that are supposed to be the last 4 digits of their Social Security number but there is no attempt to verify that information for a year – a whole year – and even then, the review is not 100% effective at removing non-citizens. The current laws make it virtually impossible to remove them until they are on the rolls for 4 years – YES, 4 YEARS. In addition, about 10% of all Ohioans registered to vote over the past 3 years – YES, 3 YEARS – have records that have probable errors and/or eligibility issues. This same system permits Boards of Elections in the state of Ohio to add people to the voting registration databases without verifying if the person is a US citizen or even who they are at all making the system a truly broken one.

Ohio HB472 will address these grievous problems and will provide more transparency. One of the most important ways is that it will give our Boards of Elections the access they need to BMV records and other tools to verify whether an applicant is a citizen or a non-citizen. The bill will require that no one is entered onto the Ohio voter rolls UNLESS the voter registration information given is completely validated.

Thank you to Representative Willis and Representative Peterson for sponsoring HB472. And thank you to all on the committee for accepting my testimonial today. Please do what is best for the people of Ohio and get this passed.